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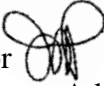
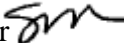
John D. Paquin
Administrator

ADMINISTRATOR'S MEMO TO COUNTIES

MEMO # 17-02

DATE: February 3, 2017

TO: County Departments of Human/Social Services Directors

FROM: John D. Paquin, Administrator 
Shelby A. B. McCulley, Assistant Administrator 

SUBJECT: Division of Juvenile Corrections Update

As you may be aware, on January 23, 2017, the ACLU of Wisconsin, Juvenile Law Center, and other attorneys representing four juveniles filed a class action complaint against the DOC seeking declaratory and injunctive relief.

It is important to note that this lawsuit is distinct from previous external and internal investigations into alleged employee misconduct. The lawsuit is focused on three specific practices: use of restrictive housing as a disposition for conduct rule violations; use of incapacitating agents (oleoresin capsicum, or "pepper spray"); and use of mechanical restraints. Each of these practices is governed by Wisconsin Administrative Code.

Although we are unable to directly address all the items raised in the lawsuit due to pending litigation, we can assure you that DOC is moving forward in enhancing services to youth and aligning with evidence-based practices, including reductions in use of restrictive housing, incapacitating agents, and mechanical restraints.

The steps we have taken in the past year, which we have shared with you in previous memos, both address concerns previously raised and provide a foundation to move forward with improvements to services to youth and improving conditions for youth in our care, including reductions in use of restrictive housing, incapacitating agents, and mechanical restraints.

Some of these reforms include:

- Increased recruitment of youth counselors and other staff to ensure appropriate staffing ratios and provision of treatment services, affording staff the opportunity to work with youth in a meaningful way in addition to managing basic institutional operations.
- Implementation of a local Pre-Service Academy to train new Youth Counselors, provides those new staff with training that will prepare them to work with youth, including verbal de-escalation techniques, juvenile mental health considerations, adolescent brain development, and trauma-informed care.

- Hiring a DJC Psychology Director and a CLS/LHS Psychological Services Manager to increase our capacity to provide mental health services to youth, one of the key ingredients in preventing the types of incidents that can result in restrictive housing placements, use of incapacitating agents, or use of mechanical restraints.
- Having licensed health care staff (RNs and LPNs) administer medication to CLS/LHS youth beginning in November 2016, increasing safety by reducing errors and enabling trained medical professionals to counsel youth who might otherwise refuse or potentially misuse medications that are designed help the youth.
- Training staff in professional communication, de-escalation, and incident response, including re-training current staff in DOC's complete use of force training curriculum, reinforcing the importance of using verbal de-escalation techniques in preventing and addressing incidents.
- Improving documentation and review of all incidents gives DJC administration the ability to both ensure appropriate and timely staff response and identify opportunities for more effective responses to incidents of youth aggression or other negative behaviors.
- Revising the youth complaint process to ensure youth confidentiality in submitting complaints to increase youth confidence in their ability to raise concerns and have them addressed, which also helps prevent more serious incidents from occurring.

DOC and DJC leadership are absolutely committed to move forward in these efforts and identifying additional areas for further improvement. We recognize that the process of organizational change is not easy and requires a solid foundation upon which to build. We have been shoring up that foundation and look forward to building on it as we continue to prioritize youth safety, evidence-based programming, protecting communities, and partnering with stakeholders throughout the state.

We will continue to engage and seek input from counties, legislators, judges, law enforcement, and other stakeholders. We look forward to collaborating with you to create better futures for the youth in our care and we encourage you to forward this memo on to any county stakeholders, including those listed above, to further share this information.

Cc: Jon E. Litscher, Secretary, DOC
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